



DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION



Information for Living in Cranbrook 2017



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Canada and to Cranbrook

Welcome! Cranbrook is a small city in south-eastern British Columbia situated in a beautiful setting bordered by two mountain ranges. The people of Cranbrook are friendly and trusting. They love the outdoors and enjoy a variety of recreational activities. They look forward to your visit. We expect that you will have a wonderful stay and will make warm and lasting friendships. Our hosts and staff are interested in helping you to ensure your stay is happy.

This guidebook has been developed to provide some information that may help you to deal with situations and questions that arise during your stay. Not all of your questions will be answered by this guidebook. We encourage you to talk to the International Education staff regarding any other concerns.

We extend our best wishes for an enjoyable and rewarding experience in Canada.

TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

When packing for your college experience, keep the following in mind: the less you bring, the more you can take back. Airlines have very strict baggage limits and will charge penalty fees if you exceed them. Keep in mind the season when packing.

1.1 Preparations:

If you require prescription medication try to bring enough to last the duration of your stay. It is also a good idea to consult your doctor about the active ingredient in the medication and get a prescription for the Canadian equivalent that can be filled at a pharmacy in Canada if/when necessary. Be sure to bring spare prescription glasses and/or contact lenses as well as a copy of your prescription. If you are particular about toiletries and other personal care items (such as feminine hygiene products), bring enough to last your entire stay.

1.2 En Route (Travelling to Canada)

International travel is exciting – and exhausting. To counteract the effects of dry conditions on airplanes and jet lag, use hand cream and possibly even a nasal spray, and drink lots of water during your trip. Avoid alcohol consumption. Get up and walk around as often as possible during your flight.

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1.3 Upon Arrival

Set your watch to Mountain Standard Time when you arrive. Try to stay up until your normal bedtime. If you must nap, set your alarm and limit naps to 30 minutes or less. Spend as much time as possible outside in the fresh air. Drink lots of water and fluids – do not drink alcohol, it prolongs the effects of jet lag.

CANADIAN CULTURE

Certain customs are the same for every culture. These include being polite and showing consideration of others. Canadians are generally easy-going and fun-loving. We don't take ourselves too seriously and aren't easily offended. There are, however, some cultural expectations and standards to be aware of. Use common sense and keep the following DOs and DON'Ts in mind:

- do knock before entering a home (and wait to be invited inside);
- do remove your shoes before entering someone's home;
- do offer to hold the door open for someone else when entering a building;
- do say "excuse me" if you bump someone accidentally or if you require assistance or need to get someone's attention;
- do raise your hand and wait for the teacher to call on you in all classrooms;
- do be polite - say "please" and "thank you" when applicable;
- don't slurp your food or chew with your mouth open;
- don't ask an adult their age (unless you know them very well);
- don't interrupt people when they are speaking, particularly teachers.

Canadians value their personal space but some forms of physical contact are common. Handshakes are routine when being introduced to someone for the first time and a pat on the back is a common way of supporting or congratulating someone. Hugging as a final farewell or to console someone is also common.

Canadians typically greet one another using their given/first names.

It is important to be aware of gender roles in Canadian society. Women and men are equal in and out of the home. Housework is generally a shared responsibility.

Canada is a liberal and multicultural society. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. In Canada, all people including immigrants and visitors have the right to be treated equally without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation or disability.

2.1 Smoking

At home - Attitudes towards smoking vary among families. Check with your host for their rules. Most families do not allow smoking in the home.

In public - Smoking is not allowed in most public places. Signs are generally posted.

At school - Smoking is not allowed indoors. If you need to smoke at school, you must go outside to the designated areas away from the entrances to any building.

2.2 Alcohol

At home - Attitudes towards drinking alcohol vary among families. Check with your host for their rules. Drunkenness is not permitted.

In public - You must be 19 years old to buy and drink alcohol in BC. Drinking alcohol is not allowed in any public places, only in licensed bars or restaurants.

At school - No alcohol is allowed on the college campus.

2.3 Holidays

Canadians celebrate several holidays during which most businesses are closed:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Holiday</u>
January 1, 2017	New Year's Day
February 13, 2017	Family Day (BC)
April 14, 2017	Good Friday (varies each year)
April 17, 2017	Easter Monday (varies each year)
May 22, 2017	Victoria Day (varies each year)
July 1, 2017	Canada Day
August 7, 2017	BC Day (First Monday in August)
September , 2017	Labour Day (first Monday in September)
October 9, 2017	Thanksgiving (varies each year)
November 11, 2017	Remembrance Day
December 25, 2017	Christmas Day

2.4 Money Matters

The basic unit is the dollar (\$1.00). Paper money is in units of 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100. Each coin has a market value in cents. Coins are marked in cents and are in units of 1, 5, 10,



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25, 1 dollar, and 2 dollars. The common term for a one dollar coin is a “loonie”. A two dollar coin is sometimes called a “toonie”. American currency and Visa and MasterCard are also accepted at most places, as well as at all the major banks.

There are banks and credit unions in Cranbrook. You can change money, receive wire transfers or cash traveller’s cheques at any one of them. If you have a student visa, you can open a bank account. Banking hours are generally 10:00 am to 4:00 pm from Monday to Thursday and 10:00 am to 6:00 pm Friday. Check the hours of your bank. They are usually posted on the door. Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) are accessible 24 hours a day on-site at each bank and at other locations in the community, including the college.

ARRIVAL INFORMATION

3.1 Settling In - Meeting Your Hosts

You will be met at the airport by your host family and/or the International Education staff. The International Education staff will show you around Cranbrook and the college campus. They will ensure that you are settled into your college program. Please ask the International Education staff or Homestay host any questions you may have.

3.2 Culture Shock

Culture shock is a very real psychological process everyone experiences upon arrival in a new country. There are four stages which affect everyone differently. The key to coping is to understand the stages and that the feelings associated with each stage are normal. Most students will get homesick for their families, friends and their school. Some become frustrated with how different things are in Canada and how tired they become having to use English all day, every day. The good news is – almost all students get past these stages and have a wonderful time in Cranbrook and Canada.

The Honeymoon Stage

When you first arrive in Cranbrook everything that is new and different is also wonderful and interesting. This is the only stage most tourists experience as they never have to adapt to the culture. This stage can last from a week to a month or more.

The Distress Stage

This is where the reality of being away from home for a longer period of time hits. Cultural differences that you found interesting earlier in your stage can become frustrating. You may feel confused, isolated and/or overwhelmed during this stage. This time can be exhausting, especially if learning English is proving to be a challenge as well.

The Transition Stage

This is the most important stage to understand. You may become angry or frustrated with Canadian life when comparing it to your home culture. Don't worry, this is normal. The key is to recognize symptoms of this stage and not give in to them.

The Integration Stage

Cultural challenges and language issues begin to decline as you accept and embrace the differences that previously frustrated you. This is when your study abroad experience becomes everything you hoped it would be; you feel confident and relaxed in your community, your school and your homestay/residence.

While it is important to be aware of the stages listed above, it is equally important to know that not everyone goes through every stage. Some arrive and are immediately homesick; others never experience the frustration of the transition stage and skip quickly to the integration stage. The key is to be aware of what is happening and remember that the International Education staff and your Homestay hosts are available to help you.

Most important thing is to remember why you came to Canada! It is supposed to be different and challenging. If Canada was the same as your home country, there would be no reason to come.

3.3 Immigration

Students studying for six months or more require a Canada Study Permit. You should have arranged all of your study permit requirements before you left home. Any changes in your status or questions you may have should be discussed with the International Education staff. Upon arrival at the college, you will be required to show your study permit to International Education staff if you have one. If you want to extend your study permit, you should see the International Education staff at least 2 months before your current permit expires. All forms for extending your study permit are available at the International Education office. More detailed information is available at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/>

3.4 Orientation

Students will receive a two or three day orientation, depending on class start dates. You will find your orientation dates on your Letter of Acceptance. Please bring the following documents to orientation:

- Passport
- Study Permit

During Orientation you will receive a tour of the College and facilities, an introduction to International staff and information that includes a review of homestay and residence

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rights and responsibilities, health, safety and registration information. English Language assessments will also take place during orientation.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

4.1 Climate

The temperature in Cranbrook varies from -20 degrees Celsius in the winter to 35 degrees Celsius in the summer. Autumn and spring have moderate temperatures and some light rainfall. The coldest months are December, January and February. During that time we have occasional snowstorms with snow remaining on the ground until spring (March). The weather continues to become warmer throughout the spring and into the summer. The warmest months are June, July and August. In July and August Cranbrook has the most sunshine hours of any city in British Columbia. In July and August temperatures consistently reach between 25 and 35 degrees Celsius.



4.2 Clothing

In Cranbrook, people dress casually. During the day, men and women might be most comfortable in jeans and a t-shirt. Evenings are cool.

Summer wear:

- a light jacket, preferably waterproof
- a warm sweatshirt or sweater
- long pants or jeans
- shorts
- t-shirts
- running shoes
- sun glasses
- sun hat
- bathing suit

Winter wear (all items can be purchased after arrival in Cranbrook):

- a warm winter jacket
- a warm hat
- a warm sweatshirt or sweater
- heavy gloves
- warm boots with good treads
- long pants or jeans

4.3 Places of Worship

There are many Christian churches in Cranbrook. Most Christian churches have services on Saturday or Sunday. Attending church is strictly voluntary. You do not have to attend church.

4.4 Transportation

Cranbrook Transit (bus) stops at College of the Rockies. The bus is a good way to travel between your homestay and the College. Schedules are provided at Orientation and are available at the Reception Desk at the College. A semester bus pass is included with your student fees so the bus is free to use for college students during that time. If you need to change buses, you should tell the bus driver. For transportation at night when the bus is not running, you can take a taxi.

For taxi service: 250-426-5511 or 250-426-1111 (Taxis are safe and reliable in Canada)

For travel outside of Cranbrook:

Greyhound Lines of Canada (bus): 250-426-3331 (bus depot is near McDonald's).
No reservations are required; this is the best way to travel to Banff.

Air Canada: 250-426-7719 (Cranbrook Airport)

Pacific Coastal Airlines: 250-489-5542 (Cranbrook Airport)

Budget Car Rental: 250-489-4371

National Car Rental: 250-489-0911

Rent-A-Wreck Car Rental: 250-426-3004

Enterprise Car Rental: 250-489-5311

If you wish to obtain a drivers license while in Cranbrook, review licensing information at <http://www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/Pages/Default.aspx>, or contact Service BC (100 Cranbrook Street N). For further assistance, please contact the International Department. After passing the written test, it is recommended that you take driving lessons from a driving school. Do not drive your host's car.

Rocky Mountain Driving School 250-426-4900

Hidden Valley Driving School 250-426-6001

4.5 Shopping

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Most businesses are open from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. Many stores are open on Saturdays. The large grocery stores are open until 10:00 pm every day. Most businesses are closed on Sundays, except restaurants, grocery stores, larger department stores, and stores in malls.

Almost all stores and restaurants accept credit or debits cards in addition to Canadian cash. Ask your host family for advice on shopping for particular goods and services.

While not mandatory, tipping is common practice at restaurants in Canada. If the service you receive from your waiter/waitress is good, please add 15% to the total bill as a tip. Tipping is also common for taxi drivers, hair stylists, and some hotel staff (e.g. the bellboy who carries your luggage to your room.) A tip of 10% is usually enough.

Retail stores are located at the Tamarack Mall, downtown on and around Baker Street., and in the big box store area near Wal-Mart. Large grocery stores include Safeway, Superstore and Save On Foods. Large department stores include Wal-Mart and Target. There are numerous small stores scattered throughout the city.

4.6 Recreation

Cranbrook and the outlying areas support many outdoor and indoor recreational activities. Among them are:



Swimming	Cranbrook Rec Plex
Curling	Curling Club (behind the Rec Plex)
Bowling	Juniper Lanes (1400 - 4 th Street N.)
Tennis	Gyro Park/Kinsmen Park
Golf	Cranbrook Golf Club
	Mission Hills Golf Course+
	St. Eugene Mission Golf Course
	Way-Lyn Ranch Golf Course+
Water Sports	Jim Smith Lake, Wasa Lake, Moyie Lake
Movies	Columbia Theatre (Tamarack Mall)
Downhill Skiing	Kimberley and Fernie*
Railway Museum	Cranbrook

+Way-Lyn Ranch and Mission Hills golf courses are good for beginners

*Kimberley is a town located 30 km North of Cranbrook; Fernie is a town located about 100 km East of Cranbrook.

4.7 Postal Services

Stamps, mailing supplies, and parcels can be purchased and/or sent at either the Main post Office at 101 - 10th Avenue S. (Monday to Friday 8:30am – 5:00pm), or Shopper’s Drug Mart in Tamarack Mall during mall hours. Please refer to their website (www.canadapost.ca) for costs.

4.8 Emergency Services

Service	Emergency Number	Non-Emergency Number
Police (RCMP)	911	250-489-3471
Fire Department	911	250-426-2325
Ambulance	911	250-426-8944
Alcohol & Drug Counselling		250-489-4344
Crisis Line	250-426-8407	

HEALTH INFORMATION

5.1 Medical Insurance

All international students at College of the Rockies are required to have medical insurance valid in Canada for the duration of their stay. You will need to purchase medical coverage as soon as you arrive at the College during orientation and our International Education staff will assist you. BC Government medical insurance is **mandatory** if you have a study permit. The BC Government medical services plan will cost \$75 per month. There is a two or three month waiting period for government medical insurance. You must purchase Guard.me medical coverage costing up-to \$100 per month for this waiting time. All forms for medical insurance are available from the International Education staff.

Students without a study permit are not eligible for BC Government medical insurance. You must purchase Guard.me medical coverage from the college costing up-to \$100 per month.

5.2 Dental Insurance

It is a good idea to go to the dentist before coming to Canada. You will be responsible for the cost of any dental services you may require. A list of qualified dentists can be found in the yellow pages of the telephone directory under the heading ‘Dentists’. If you need help, International Education staff can make an appointment at a dentist for you. For more information about extra insurance to cover the dental cost, please contact International Education staff.

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5.3 Medical Aid

If you need to see a doctor, and you are not in an emergency situation, you should visit a Medical Clinic. Most clinics in Cranbrook require an appointment. International staff can assist you to make an appointment.

There are pharmacies where both prescription and non-prescription medications are available. If you have allergies, please consult a pharmacist before purchasing a non-prescription medication to ensure it is safe and/or appropriate for you to take.

Emergency Medical assistance is available day and night at:

East Kootenay Regional Hospital 13 - 24th Avenue N Tel: 250-426-5281

Call 911 if you require an ambulance.

HOMESTAY

We hope your homestay experience will be one of the best parts of your stay in Canada. If you have questions or problems it is best to **discuss them immediately with your host family.** Also the International



Education staff is available to help with any problems. The Homestay program provides an opportunity for you to live with a Canadian family. It will help you gain new insights to our country, yourself and others.

On behalf of the college, the International Education staff has interviewed each family applied to be a homestay host. We have tried to find hosts interested in providing you with a warm and friendly environment and the help and support you will need for your studies and your stay in Canada. Please remember you are subject to all the laws of Canada, but you are also entitled to the same protection as any Canadian citizen. If you have any questions or concerns, you should discuss these with the International Education staff.

Your host family will be different from your family and from other host families. You will be able to share in both the pleasures and responsibilities of home life in Canada. To do so, you must respect the family's rules. In the beginning, ask about the rules and don't feel embarrassed when asking for help.

If English is not your first language, you will find that trying to speak and understand English all day is tiring; continue making an effort to understand. You will become a part of the family faster by trying to learn as much as you can through being a friend

and participant. Many things which are initially awkward may be more comfortable later if you first give them a chance.

Your host family is anxious to make your stay a happy one. They may be making an effort to include you in activities inside and outside the home. There may be times when something troubles or confuses you. Always ask someone to explain things that are not clear to you. Also, let others know when something pleases you.

It will be helpful to pursue developing your own friends as well. Your host cannot be a constant companion. However, your host family can be an important source of help in learning about our community.

During your stay, if difficulties or questions arise that cannot be solved through discussions with your host, contact the International Education staff. Both your happiness and the happiness of your host family are important.

6.1 Food and Drink

You will be provided with 3 meals per day. Family customs vary so please check with your host as to their habits. The following information is a guideline only. Find out when mealtimes are and be sure to come to the table on time. If you won't be home for a meal or expect to be late, be sure you tell your host family. Host families are not responsible to pay for any meals purchased in a restaurant; homestay fees cover only meals eaten in the home.

Breakfast: (usually between 7am and 9am)

Breakfast usually consists of cereal and toast or muffins, juice and coffee, and may include hot eggs or bacon. Members of Canadian families often prepare their own breakfast. You may be expected to make your own breakfast.

Lunch: (usually around 12 noon)

Lunch is generally a light meal consisting of a salad, soup or sandwiches. Many students carry their lunch to school (bagged lunch). During school days, your host will provide you with a bagged lunch or food to prepare your own bag lunch, which you can eat at the college. There is also a cafeteria on campus where microwaves are available to heat lunches, or if you wish to purchase your lunch.



Dinner (or Supper): (the evening meal is around 5 pm or 6 pm)

This is usually the largest meal of the day and often consists of meat, vegetables and potatoes, rice or pasta. Dessert may be a sweet or fruit. Dinners are the biggest and most important meal of the day. It is a time to eat, relax and socialize. Please make a

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point of maximizing the dinner experience; it is a great time to connect with your family and improve your English.

Canadian food is very diverse. In any given week a Canadian family might eat Italian pasta, a Chinese stir-fry, a North American bar-b-que and a British-style pot roast for dinner. Local grocery stores stock ingredients for meals made around the world. Please advise your host parents of any food allergies and let them know what foods you enjoy the most. Meals are usually served “home-style” which means you help yourself to the various dishes on the table. Please note: the water in Cranbrook is clean and is drinkable straight from the tap.

6.2 Physical Environment

You will be provided with your own room with a bed, dresser, closet, and desk. You will have access to your own or to a shared bathroom including toilet, sink and bath or shower. The family generally has a shared living space for entertainment such as television or music. There is usually a separate space for the preparation and eating of meals.

6.3 Housecleaning

Check with your homestay host regarding their expectations. Generally you will be responsible to make your own bed on a daily basis and keep your own room tidy. You should always clean the bathroom after you use it. You may want to help with some daily jobs such as setting the table or doing dishes. This is a good way to become more familiar with Canadian life and practice English.

6.4 Laundry

The homestay host will show you how to use the washing machine and dryer. If you want to use the laundry facilities, please check with your host first.

6.5 Television/Internet

Most homes have a television with DVD player and some homes have a computer with internet or a wireless connection. Free wireless internet for laptop computer is available at the College. The College also offers free computer use if it is not available in homestay.

6.6 Bathrooms

Schedule your showers to fit in with the schedules of other family members. Please do not take long showers as using too much hot water can cause problems for other family members who might be showering after you. A typical shower in Canada lasts about 10 minutes. Ask your host family for guidelines about bathroom use. Please provide your own toiletries such as toothpaste, shampoo, etc.

6.7 Telephones

All host families have a telephone or a cell phone. Check with your host regarding their rules. In particular, ask how they wish you to pay for long distance calls if needed. Telephone calling cards can be purchased easily and used at your homestay. The International Department also offers a free use telephone for international calls (limit one call per day, maximum five minutes).

6.8 Transportation

Most students can take the public transit system (bus) to and from the College. For rides outside of school, please discuss your needs with your host ahead of time.

6.9 Visitors

If you wish to have a visitor, please ask your host family if this is convenient. Although it is not usual, if you wish to have an overnight guest, you must ask your host family first. It is unacceptable to have friends of the opposite sex stay overnight.

6.10 Visits Away From Your Host Family

If you plan to visit a friend for a meal or overnight, or go on a short holiday, remember to inform your host family and leave a telephone number where they can reach you. If you are going to be away longer than planned, always phone your host family to let them know.

RESIDENCE

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Living in the Purcell House student residence is a great way to meet Canadian college students. The residence is designed so that six students share an apartment called a “pod”. Each pod has six private bedrooms, two bathrooms, one kitchen and one common area. Like homestay, International students in the residence will



have to share their home with others. It is important to respect the other students who share your pod and to follow the rules of the residence. The Residence Manager will provide a residence rulebook for you when you first arrive. If you have any questions or concerns about the residence, please feel free to talk to the Residence Manager or the student Residence Advisors.

It is important that you make an effort to communicate with the other students that live in your pod. Your stay in the residence will be much more comfortable if you make an effort to be friendly with your “podmates” and to join in social activities at the residence.

7.1 Food and Drink

If you live in the residence, you may eat in the cafeteria or restaurant. However, many students choose to prepare meals in the residence. Remember the kitchens in the residence are shared by six students; therefore, please be considerate of others by cleaning up immediately. Never “borrow” food from other students.

7.2 Housecleaning

There are no maids in the residence. Each student must clean up their own room, wash their own clothes and clean up their own dishes. All students must also share in routine cleaning such as vacuuming common areas, taking out the garbage, cleaning the bathrooms and cleaning the kitchen. Always clean up the kitchen and bathroom immediately after you have used them.

7.3 Laundry

There are coin-operated washers and dryers located at the Residence. You must supply your own laundry soap and dryer softener.

7.4 Bathrooms

Schedule your showers to fit in with the schedule of other pod members. A typical shower in Canada lasts 10 minutes. Please provide your own shampoo, soap, towel, toothpaste etc. Do not shower late at night when your podmates are sleeping.

7.5 Kitchen Use

Talk to your podmates about their schedules so that sharing the kitchen is convenient for everyone. You will be required to provide your own dishes, cookware, appliances and food. Never “borrow” any of these items from your podmates without their permission. Always clean up the kitchen immediately after you finish cooking. Never leave dishes in the sink. Leftover food should be thrown in the garbage or placed in the refrigerator. Please clean the refrigerator regularly and throw out any food items that have gone bad. Make sure to leave room in the cupboards and refrigerator for your podmates to use.

7.6 Telephones

Every bedroom has a private phone line. You may contact the telephone company if you would like your telephone line activated. You will be responsible for purchasing a telephone and paying all telephone charges. If you do not wish to have your own private telephone, you may use the pay telephone in the main lobby of the residence or purchase a cellular phone. Phone cards can be purchased at the College Bookstore.

7.7 Television/Stereos/Internet

A television and DVD are available for the use of all residence students in the common lounge. You are welcome to use this TV. However, remember that it is for the use of all residents so please be considerate of others. You are welcome to purchase your own television for your bedroom. Stereos and TVs should not be played so loud that they will disturb podmates. You may also activate a personal internet line with the phone company.

7.8 Visitors

Visitors are welcome in the residence. However, your visitors must also be considerate of the other students who live in your pod. Please be quiet when your roommates are sleeping or studying. Weeknights (Monday to Thursday) are normally expected to be quiet so that students can study. More noise is acceptable on Friday and Saturday nights within reason.

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

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Your feedback is important to us.

International Education and Development staff welcomes feedback from students regarding this guidebook. If there is information missing that you think is important and should be included here, we would like your input.

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